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FROM: LONDON

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TO: Secretary of State

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SENT DEPARTMENT 3861; REPEATED INFORMATION PARIS 590, BONN 231, MOSCOW 136, BERLIN 71.

PARIS FOR USRO AND THURSTON

NOFORN

DEPTEL 6737

WORKING LEVEL OFFICIAL WESTERN DEPARTMENT FONOFF HAS INDICATED TO EMB OFFICER THAT UK RECOMMENDATION MIDDLE OF MARCH OR LATE APRIL FOR FOUR POWER CONFERENCE ON GERMANY ORIGINATED IN PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE. HE NOTED EN PASSANT THAT POLITICALLY ATTRACTIVE TIME FOR HOLDING GENERAL ELECTION IN UK MIGHT BE AFTER ANNOUNCEMENT FOUR POWER CONFERENCE BUT BEFORE IT IS HELD. SOURCE ALSO REMARKED THAT WHILE CONVINCED OF KEY IMPORTANCE BERLIN WITH RESPECT ENTIRE WESTERN POSITION VIS-

A-VIS SOVIET UNION AND NECESSITY IN CONSEQUENCE OF MAINTAINING FIRM AND UNITED WESTERN POLICY, CERTAIN OF HIS SUPERIORS REGARD BERLIN SITUATION AS SO HIGHLY DANGEROUS TO PEACE, AND WEST, THAT THEY BELIEVE IT DESIRABLE "DISPOSE" OF PROBLEM IN CONTEXT OVER-ALL EAST-WEST NEGOTIATIONS ON GERMANY AND EUROPEAN SECURITY. SOURCE ALSO DIFFERS WITH SOME OF COLLEAGUES, NOTABLY HEAD OF NORTHERN DEPARTMENT, WHO BELIEVE MAJOR SOVIET OBJECTIVE IN RAISING BERLIN QUESTION IS TO BLOCK GERMAN NUCLEAR ARMAMENT. IF THIS WERE CASE SOVIET PRICE FOR SETTLEMENT BERLIN ISSUE MIGHT BE MUCH LESS THAN IF OBJECTIVES MORE FAR-REACHING.

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-2- 3861, JANUARY 26, 6 PM, FROM LONDON

FONOFF OFFICIAL ALSO EXPRESSED VIEW THAT IMMINENCE
GENERAL ELECTION AFFECTING JUDGMENT UK POLITICIANS ON
FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES, THAT THEY ARE UNNECESSARILY
NERVOUS ABOUT PUBLIC OPINION AND HESITANT TO TAKE FIRM
POSITIONS SITUATION REQUIRES. ON THIS POINT, EMBASSY
BELIEVES UK PUBLIC OPINION DOES NOT RPT NOT ADEQUATELY
APRECIATE DANGERS IN BERLIN SITUATION NOR DOES IT FULLY
UNDERSTAND ISSUES INVOLVED.

PRESS GENERALLY HAS TAKEN LINE NEGOTIATIONS WITH SOVIETS
VIRTUAL CERTAINTY, THAT WESTERN POSITION MORE "FLEXIBLE"
THAN IN PAST AND THAT THEREFORE EAST-WEST AGREEMENT OF
SOME SORT MORE LIKELY THAN CONFLICT.

BARBOUR

AM/21

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